# Saint Paul Planning Commission City Hall Conference Center 15 Kellogg Boulevard West

# Minutes October 30, 2009

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, October 30, 2009, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

**Commissioners** Mmes. Faricy, Lu, Morton, Smitten, Thao, Wencl; and

**Present:** Messrs. Alton, Commers, Goodlow, Gordon, Johnson, Kramer, Nelson, Ward

and Wickiser.

**Commissioners** Mmes. \*Donnelly-Cohen, \*Porter, and Messrs. \*Margulies, \*Schertler, and

\*Spaulding.

**Absent:** 

\*Excused

**Also Present:** Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Tom Beach, Department of Safety and

Inspections, Patricia James, Merritt Clapp-Smith, Kate Reilly, Josh Williams, Tia

Anderson, Sarah Zorn, Emily Goodman, and Sonja Butler, Department of

Planning and Economic Development staff.

### I. Swearing in of New Commissioner

New Saint Paul Planning Commission member David Wickiser was sworn in by Shari Moore, City Clerk.

There was an informal introduction of the new and current Commissioners.

# II. Approval of minutes October 16, 2009.

MOTION: Commissioner Wencl moved approval of the minutes of October 16, 2009. Commissioner Ward seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

### III. Chair's Announcements

Chair Alton announced that the Minnesota Chapter of American Planning Association has an offer to allow the entire Planning Commission to become a member for a total fee of \$50. Donna Drummond will be sending out the roster for that membership and if anyone does not want to be a member let Ms. Drummond know.

# **IV.** Planning Director's Announcements

Donna Drummond reported that on October 20<sup>th</sup> there was a kick-off event for the Smith Avenue Plan. The plan will be prepared by a community task force, which is still being formed. Kristina Smitten will be the Planning Commission co-chair from Saint Paul and someone else from West

Saint Paul will also be a co-chair. The plan will look at revitalizing Smith Avenue as it crosses the border between the two cities. Kate Reilly will be the primary staff person for this.

At City Council on October 21, 2009 the proposed Dynamic Display Ordinance had a public hearing. The public hearing was kept open and laid over to November 4, 2009. There was testimony as to whether or not electronic signs in windows should be regulated. Also there was testimony as to whether or not the regulations in the B2 zoning district should be a little less stringent if the site is not near residential uses.

Also at City Council there was a public hearing on the Walgreens site plan approval. The Council upheld the appeal, overturning the Planning Commission's approval of the site plan. The City Council also approved a settlement in the Exxon Mobil case. Negotiations for the potential acquisition of this property by the City/HRA, which is part of the Victoria Park development, have been underway for several years. There were questions about whether an amendment to the Victoria Park Master Plan would now be needed because of the settlement. Ms. Drummond said she would invite Lucy Thompson, the primary staff person for the master plan, to give an update on the project at an upcoming Planning Commission meeting.

V. PUBLIC HEARING: <u>Bicycle Parking Amendments</u> – Item from the Neighborhood Planning Committee. (*Kate Reilly*, 651/266-6618)

Chair Alton announced that the Saint Paul Planning Commission is holding a public hearing on the Bicycle Parking Amendments. Notice of the public hearing was published in the Legal Ledger on October 12, 2009, and was mailed to the citywide Early Notification System list and other interested parties.

Kate Reilly, PED staff, said that the Commission asked the Neighborhood Planning Committee to study a bicycle parking amendment to the Zoning code. Basically the process was to look at two surveys that were done on bicycle parking codes from a number of cities across the country. Based on these surveys, the staff and Neighborhood Committee made their recommendations. There are two main components of the amendment. The first is a requirement to provide a minimum amount of bicycle parking, which is one (1) space for every twenty (20) motor vehicle parking spaces, and for those lots that have fewer then twenty (20) spaces, there will be a minimum of one secure bicycle parking space for an off-street parking facility of twelve (12) or more motor vehicle spaces. The second is that bicycle parking may be substituted for up to five (5) percent of the minimum off-street parking.

Ms. Reilly said that an amendment to the maintenance section of parking facilities will come forward with the regular parking revisions, adding that all off-street parking facilities shall be kept in a good state of repair and that required parking areas shall be cleared of snow within a reasonable time.

Chair Alton read the rules of procedure for the public hearing.

No one spoke. Ms. Reilly did receive some comments from the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD), but has not reviewed them yet. She will talk about them when the Neighborhood Committee reviews this item.

Commissioner Gordon asked what is the basis for the one to 20 ratio and the up to 5% of the

minimum off-street parking requirements?

Ms. Reilly said that both of those numbers were derived from the two (2) surveys of other communities. The average requirement across the country is one per 20 spaces and the 5% is also the most commonly selected requirement for the substitution. The MCCD comments are requesting that this 5% be increased to 10% or higher.

Commissioner Gordon asked that the Neighborhood Committee consider increasing from 5% to 10% the percentage of parking that could be substituted with bicycle parking.

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Wencl moved to close the public hearing, leave the record open for written testimony until 4:30 p.m. on Monday, November 2, 2009, and to refer the matter back to the Neighborhood Planning Committee for review and recommendation. Commissioner Ward seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

# VI. Zoning Committee

**Site Plan Review –** List of current applications. (*Tom Beach*, 651/266-9086)

Two items to come before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, November 3, 2009 – Nelson parking lot at 1591 Blair. This is a new 11 car parking lot for an existing commercial building.

Hmongtown Market Place parking lot at 217 Como. Pavement of an existing gravel parking lot for an existing commercial building (approximately one acre in size).

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

#09-203-521 MGM parking lot – Modification of a previously approved site plan. The approved site plan shows a privacy fence between the MGM parking lot and the public alley. The plan under consideration does not show this fence. 1102 Larpenteur Avenue West. (*Tom Beach*, 651/266-9086)

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Morton moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to deny the site plan.

MOTION TO AMEND: Commissioner Commers moved to amend the resolution revising #3 (b) first bullet to add "not" before "unsafe"; second bullet to strike out the words "does not" and change the word "prohibit" to "prohibits"; and fourth bullet striking the words "more than" and at the end of the sentence add the words "or less". Alsoto include a reference to section 63.310(f). Commissioner Wencl seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

The main motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

<u>09-280-240 Dr. Lee Chen</u> – Variances of front yard setback for porte-cochere (25 feet required, 18 feet, 7 inches proposed), parking location in front yard within White Bear Avenue Overlay

District, and sign area (48 square feet permitted, 102.3 square feet proposed). 1880 Old Hudson Road, SW corner of Hazel. (*Penelope Simison*, 651/266-6554)

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Morton moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the variances subject to additional conditions. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

Commissioner Morton announced the items on the agenda for the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, November 5, 2009.

### VII. Comprehensive Planning Committee

<u>Study of Saint Paul Parking Requirements: Public Discussion Phase</u> – Staff presentation. (*Merritt Clapp-Smith*, 651/266-6547 and Tia Anderson, 651/266-6562)

Merritt Clapp-Smith and Tia Anderson, PED staff, gave a power point presentation updating the Commission on the off-street parking requirements study. In May, the Planning Commission passed a resolution initiating a study "to consider amendments to the zoning code regarding off-street parking facility design standards". Ms. Clapp-Smith reviewed the main goals and objectives of the study. Key goals are consolidation of the variety of use requirements, reductions to requirements where justified, simplification, and balancing the interests of businesses, residents, institutions, government, and customers. Ms. Clapp-Smith talked about what these changes are not addressing because they have to be very clear on that in the public discussions – they do not address existing parking deficiencies, Central Corridor parking management, downtown parking, or parking management tools like permit zones and meters.

The proposed revisions aim to implement a number of policies in the new Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan. They are also informed by best practices from around the country, requirements in other cities, and counts of parking space utilization in lots around Saint Paul. Ms. Clapp-Smith showed a map of the off-street parking variances from 1999 to the present. She showed two slides representing the consolidation and general reduction of parking requirements for retail, office and eating places. She said that there is still some debate about whether eating places should be required to have the same amount or more parking than retail businesses because there is a tradeoff to be considered. On the one hand, eating places seem to generate more parking demand per square foot than retail, but on the other hand, placing eating places at the same requirement level as other retail and office would make transition of commercial spaces between these uses easier.

Commissioner Smitten asked about parking based on the square footage of a restaurant -- say a Perkins style versus a small, corner table restaurant.

Ms. Clapp-Smith said that staff examined using a stepped requirement for smaller and bigger eating places, for instance, requiring one (1) space per 400 sq ft for an establishment under 4,000 square feet and to one (1) per 200 sq ft for the space above 4,000 square feet. That is something that could be brought into the revisions if sentiment indicates that people want to be somewhere between the two requirements.

Commissioner Gordon said that the general retail the number proposed of one (1) space per 400 sq ft would require less parking than any of the existing numbers, so is part of the intent to

decrease the number of parking places overall to discourage the use of automobiles and encourage use of mass transit or other forms of transportation?

Ms. Clapp-Smith said the current proposed requirements fit most closely with a parking paradigm that is aimed to park for average demand. She noted that the current city requirements fit a "park for peak demand" paradigm which leaves many lots in the city sitting half empty, while other cities, like Minneapolis, have moved more towards a 'park to meet most but not all demand" paradigm which limits parking and intends to push the market to other forms of transportation and denser urban living. Under this model, you must assume some spillover parking will occur, especially if proximate free parking is available. Therefore, parking experts around the nation say that when you shift paradigms to a situation which significantly lowers requirements, the market must become more accountable for providing needed parking, and to keep the system honest and responsible for itself. Nearby spillover parking opportunities may need to be restricted through use of tools such as permit zones.

Tia Anderson, PED staff, presented proposed parking requirement changes for residential multifamily dwelling units. The current multi-family dwelling unit parking requirement is 1.5 spaces per unit. Based on concerns staff heard about dense multi-family units which house unrelated individuals and associated higher car use, staff are suggesting a stepped approach for multi-family units based on the number of rooms. A one to two room unit would require one (1) parking space, a three to four room unit would require 1.5 spaces, and units with five (5) rooms or more would require two (2) parking spaces. Ms. Anderson then talked about shifting the requirement for community residential facilities to be the same as the recently adopted standard for sober houses of 1.5 spaces per every four (4) adult residents. Commissioner Nelson commented that sober houses are different than other community residential facilities because they have no staff at the site, whereas the other facilities do and may thus need more parking. Ms. Anderson noted the point. She next described possible changes under consideration for institutional parking requirements such as colleges, universities, schools, churches, chapels and other places of worship. The intent is to move from seating or occupant based parking requirements to gross floor area based requirements, which are easier to determine and enforce. Examination of possible changes to college and university requirements is just beginning and will involve conversation with the institutions. If re-examination of these requirements appears to need more time, then the item may be pulled out of the citywide parking revisions and brought forward later.

Ms. Anderson said that they have had discussions with the Saint Paul Port Authority, in terms of moving to a decreased parking requirement for wholesale establishments. A new provision within the parking code is a maximum parking requirement. She showed what the current parking requirement is compared to what the revised parking requirement would be in the future. Ms. Anderson said that they are also talking about possible reductions to the parking minimum along mixed use corridors. She showed slides of current mixed use corridors that are being defined within the land use plan. Commissioner Ward suggested considering parking reductions for provision of motorcycle or scooter parking.

Commission Smitten questioned why we are using mixed use corridors versus transit corridors, consistent with the conversations around transit oriented design, when the mixed use corridors are really about where the transit infrastructure exists or will exist. Why isn't transit corridor language used?

Ms. Anderson said that in terms of the mixed use corridors, they are meant to be the areas where there is that transit infrastructure, where transit is planned to be by the Metropolitan Council, or where there is good use of walking and biking. Staff did discuss whether to identify and base reductions on existing transit streets, planned transit streets, or mixed-use corridors.

Ms. Clapp-Smith showed the study process timeline, the three public meeting dates, and the stakeholders meetings. They want good feed back on the proposed revisions during the public review process. She said that good information and an opportunity to comment or send questions is available on the city's website at <a href="https://www.stpaul.gov/offstreetparkingstudy">www.stpaul.gov/offstreetparkingstudy</a>.

Commissioner Morton announced that the next meeting is on Tuesday, November 10, 2009.

# VIII. Neighborhood Planning Committee

Commissioner Wencl announced the items on the agenda for the next Neighborhood Committee meeting on Wednesday, November 4, 2009.

### IX. Communications Committee

No report.

### X. Task Force Reports

Donna Drummond, Planning Director announced the first meeting of the Western, Victoria, Hamline Station Area Planning Steering Committee was last night. Terri Thao is the Co-Chair.

Commissioner Thao said that they had a very good kick-off and a very full committee.

### XI. Old Business

None

### XII. New Business

None

# XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:03 a.m.

Planning and Economic Development Department, City of Saint Paul		
Respectfully submitted,	Approved	_
	(Date)	
Donna Drummond	Marilyn Porter	
Planning Director	Secretary of the Planning Commission	

PED\butler\planning commission\October 30, 2009

Recorded and prepared by Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary